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SUBJECT: KABILA ENGAGES DIP CORPS ON MONUC, ELECTIONS AND SECURITY ISSUES

Classified By: Ambassador William J. Garvelink for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

(C) 1. President Kabila convoked a broad group of ambassadors on November 24 to share his views on MONUC, security and elections. Participants included ambassadors from UN Security Council, SADC and CEEC countries, as well as Belgium, the EU, AU and MONUC. Kabila called the meeting to clarify his position on these three topics and correct any wrong impressions. On MONUC, Kabila stressed that while he wanted to begin preparations for MONUC's withdrawal before next summer's fiftieth anniversary of the DRC's independence, he was not asking the UN to leave "today." Kabila noted improvements to the security situation, but that Kimia II would continue until the goal of ridding the DRC of the FDLR was fully met. General elections will be held as mandated by the Constitution; the impression that the government of the DRC (GDRC) was not taken steps for planning elections was simply incorrect. Kabila also took the opportunity to note his displeasure that financing assurances had not been confirmed at the November 18 Paris Club tour d'horizon meeting. End Summary.

MONUC Mandate Renewal

12. (C) Kabila began by noting that the current UN peacekeeping presence in DRC is now going on eleven years--initiated during a period of war and at the request of the GDRC. He stressed that his government had not requested the immediate departure of MONUC. Rather, he wanted to study the situation and begin to review possible reductions and mandate changes in light of the current security environment. Referencing his desire (which has been previously noted to USG officials) to make an announcement regarding MONUC's withdrawal before the DRC's 50th anniversary of independence on 30 June, 2010, Kabila highlighted the need to begin now to prepare for MONUC's departure. However, he clearly stated that he was not requesting MONUC leave "today." Together, Kabila added, we can begin to take the necessary steps.

Security

13. (C) Kabila described an improved security situation in eastern DRC since the beginning of the year, highlighting the success of joint DRC-Rwandan operations. Kimia II has weakened and scattered the enemy, though the mission was not yet complete. Kimia II would continue, stated Kabila, until the FDLR was terminated. This includes the return to Rwanda of FDLR rebels. This has always been and continues to be the GDRC's position. MONUC's position was not at odds with that of the GDRC. Kabila highlighted the importance of strong coordination with the government of Rwanda, particularly in

light of constant rumors.

¶4. (C) The recent conflicts in Equateur province were the result of ethnic tensions, according to Kabila, with serious consequences for the civilian population. Kabila finished by describing the overall security situation in the country as calm-- citing, in particular, no security issues in Kinshasa or the Kasais. At the end of the meeting and following interventions by several ambassadors, Kabila noted that Security Sector Reform had been hampered to date by a lack of coordination and a common vision.

Elections

¶5. (C) Kabila began by noting that plans for elections had "not moved." He knew there was the impression that the GDRC Q"not moved." He knew there was the impression that the GDRC was not taking required steps to plan for elections-- this, however, was not the case. Elections would be held as mandated by the Constitution. Elections were one of two key agenda items, for example, at the inter-institutional meeting planned for November 25 in Mburi-Mayi. While noting that the GDRC would not "take risks" with the Constitution regarding elections, Kabila did concede that the timing of local elections reflected a "little contradiction." Kabila asked that MONUC be patient regarding GDRC planning for elections, but also asked if MONUC would still be in the DRC to help support the elections logistically. The organization of elections is, noted Kabila, a question of national sovereignty. Kabila stated his desire to have the Congolese

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state organize the next general elections, which would be the first time the DRC had the capacity to do so independently.

Displeasure over Paris Club

¶6. (C) Showing clear displeasure, Kabila noted he was disappointed that the Paris Club had not confirmed financing assurances at the November 18 meeting of the Paris Club. The DRC had done what was required on the renegotiation of the Chinese contracts; now donors were putting in place new conditions. (Note: Financing assurances were confirmed by all Paris Club creditors on November 25. The delay was a result of concerns raised by the government of Canada regarding certain investment disputes. End Note)

Dip Corps Comments

¶7. (C) Ivorian, French, South African, UK, Swedish, and Russian Ambassadors made brief interventions, largely focused on the issue of MONUC's mandate renewal. UK noted continued British support for elections, highlighted the importance to the UK government of the upcoming Copenhagen summit on climate change and pressed for enhanced GDRC efforts to fight impunity and address sexual and gender based violence. (Note: Kabila noted while environment/conservation issues are of critical importance to the DRC, he would not be attending the Copenhagen summit; the GDRC will likely be represented by the Minister of Environment. End Note) Noting that that France would "have the pen" on the MONUC mandate renewal, French Ambassador stressed the need for an "intelligent" MONUC withdrawal plan, including initial refocusing towards greater capacity building. French Ambassador also noted the need for a greater focus on economic development as part of security efforts in eastern DRC. Russian Ambassador concurred with his French counterpart on the need for a well thought-through plan for eventual withdrawal of MONUC, but that planning could begin before next year's independence anniversary. MONUC noted that initial discussions had already begun

between SRSG Doss and Kabila on the mandate renewal. On Dongo (Equateur), MONUC noted continued support for the GDRC's efforts to address the on-going conflict.

¶ 8. (C) COMMENT: Kabila's principal message to the assembled Ambassadors seemed to be threefold. First, he clearly wants to be able to announce that MONUC is preparing to leave before the June 30, 2010 independence anniversary celebrations. At the same time, he recognizes that MONUC will need to stay for the immediate term; his statement that he was not asking MONUC to leave "today" appeared to try to reassure key donors of this sentiment. Kabila's statements on elections also appeared to be aimed at trying to reassure donors that, at a minimum, general elections would be held as mandated by the Constitution in 2011. Finally, Kabila also wanted to highlighted that while the security situation in the east had improved and changed, military operations were not over yet and would continue. Appearing distracted at times, Kabila showed visible annoyance when referring to the Paris Club meeting. END COMMENT

GARVELINK